

**FARMINGTON CITY**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
May 10, 2012

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**WORK SESSION**

***Present:** Chairman Michael Nilson, Commissioners Brett Anderson, Rick Draper, Kris Kaufman, Brigham Mellor, Bob Murri, and Michael Wagstaff, Alternate Commissioners Brad Dutson and Mack McDonald, Community Development Director David Petersen, Associate City Planner Christy Alexander, and Recording Secretary Cynthia DeCoursey*

**Farmington City – (Public Hearing) – Applicant is requesting a recommendation to amend the Sign Ordinance prohibiting electronic signs. (ZT-3-12)**

**David Petersen** said that electronic billboard signs have become a hot topic state wide. In Farmington, electronic billboard signs are allowed in zones BP, C, C-H, C-R and LM&B, and there are presently two electronic signs in Farmington: (1) Lagoon sign next to Frontage Road (Lagoon Drive) near the Park Lane Interchange; and (2) Davis County Fairgrounds sign on the southeast corner of 1100 West and Clark Lane. He said that such signs often result in negative impacts to adjacent property owners, and sometimes companies are willing to work out a compromise. There are numerous examples in Davis County of obtrusive electronic billboard signs where the owners have not subdued the lighting and examples were they have. The Commission discussed the pros and cons of electronic billboard signs. Some Commissioners did not like the “prohibit” in the staff report, and said sometimes electronic billboard signs may have a place. Staff said maybe so, but reminded the Commission that due to a pending legislation law by the state the City has 6 months to adopt a new ordinance, which is not much time. In the event it is not formulated in time, it will be much easier for the City to say no to a bad electronic billboard sign application while the City continues to work on its ordinance.

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**REGULAR SESSION**

***Present:** Chairman Michael Nilson, Commissioners Brett Anderson, Rick Draper, Kris Kaufman, Brigham Mellor, Bob Murri, and Michael Wagstaff, Alternate Commissioners Brad Dutson and Mack McDonald were in attendance but did not vote, Community Development Director David Petersen, Associate City Planner Christy Alexander, and Recording Secretary Cynthia DeCoursey*

**Chairman Nilson** began the meeting at 7:05 p.m. and offered the opening prayer.

**#1 – Minutes**

***Motion:***

**Bob Murri** made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting. It was seconded by **Michael Wagstaff** and approved by Commissioners **Anderson, Draper, Kaufman, Mellor, Murri, Nilson**, and **Wagstaff**.

***Motion:***

**Michael Wagstaff** made a motion approve the minutes of the April 26, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting. It was seconded by **Rick Draper** and approved by Commissioners **Anderson, Draper, Kaufman, Mellor, Murri, Nilson**, and **Wagstaff**.

## **#2 – City Council Report**

**Christy Alexander** reported that the City Council approved the Schematic Plan for the Legacy Estates Subdivision Phases 1 and 2, the Final Plat and Final (PUD) Master Plan for the Villa Susanna (PUD) Subdivision, and the Final Plat for the Spring Creek Estates Subdivision Phase 5.

### **SIGN ORDINANCE TEXT CHANGES**

## **#3 – Farmington City – (Public Hearing) – Applicant is requesting a recommendation to amend the Sign Ordinance prohibiting electronic billboard signs. (ZT-3-12)**

**David Petersen** explained that he used the word “prohibit” because he was concerned that the 6-month time period would not be sufficient to resolve this issue. There are many issues associated with electronic billboard signs, and he advised the Commission to do what is best for Farmington and said staff recommends that the Commission table this item to allow additional time for research.

### ***Public Hearing:***

**Chairman Nilson** opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m., and the following people made comments:

**Kenneth Palmer**, Allied Sign, 2924 Penn Avenue, Ogden, said it does not make sense to have a 1-year moratorium during which no additional signs would be allowed. Many people are concerned about the safety of electronic billboard signs, but there is no correlation between these signs and traffic accidents.

**Dave Wallace**, 1605 S. Gramercy Road, Salt Lake City, works for the Young Electric Sign Company (YESCO), and he pointed out that electronic billboard signs can have a great impact on business owners and communities. Studies have shown that businesses typically realize a 15% increase in revenues, but the benefits are not just monetary— electronic billboard signs can also be used for traffic warnings and amber alerts, and they often create a 20% rise in occupancy for strip malls and other businesses which generates additional tax dollars.

**Dustin Smith**, 17 East 775 South, Layton, is a graphic designer for YESCO. A survey by the University of Utah showed that 89% of people did not want restrictions on this type of signage. KSL asked the question, “Should the government ban electronic billboard signs?”, and 84% of responders said no. The amber alert system is an important benefit of electronic billboard signs.

**Doug Herrscher**, 1649 West 1700 South, Salt Lake City, is a board member of the Utah Sign Association and is employed by Montroy Sign Products which provides supplies to sign companies. Signs are a critical part of life, and they provide communication, direction, and advertisement. Technology has now made it possible to increase the viability of signs, and he encouraged the Commission to evaluate the need to incorporate electronic billboard signs.

**Bert Margetts**, 500 East 200 South, is a business owner and has been a resident of Farmington for 40 years. He is concerned about the proposal to prohibit electronic billboard signs. The electronic billboard sign in Woods Cross was too bright, but the problem was solved by reducing the light output—dimming devices which change the daytime brightness to nighttime mode are readily available. He congratulated the Council and the Commission for bringing in new businesses and encouraged them to help the business owners succeed by allowing electronic billboard signs.

**Adam Leishman**, 254 East 200 South, Farmington, is Lagoon’s advertising manager and a life-long resident of Farmington. Lagoon’s electronic sign has been in use for 25 years—without complaint or incident. It operates at 80% of full illumination and dims when ambient light decreases. It has been a powerful tool for advertising and customer service. They have no plans to change the sign on 1470 S. to an electronic billboard sign

but would like to have the option. Lagoon would be willing to discuss the possibility of allowing their signs to be used for a broader purpose such as City, County, or State sponsored events.

**Paul Young**, 2401 Foothill Drive, Salt Lake City, works for YESCO and said the business was founded by his grandfather in 1920 in Ogden. He encouraged Farmington to look for ways to help businesses succeed—especially during this recession. Sign ordinances are typically divided into two sections: on-premise signs vs. off-premise signs, and they are completely different from each other and serve different purposes.

**Kim Thomas**, 1605 S. Gramercy Road, YESCO, said several studies have proven that signs do not cause accidents. One study involved 160,000 accidents and 500,000 cars, and it was determined that there was no relationship between electronic billboard signs and accidents. She encouraged the City to approve electronic billboard signs with limits on brightness.

**Jeff Young**, 2401 S. Foothill Drive, said YESCO is a 92-year-old business with 640 employees in Utah. Their electronic billboard signs are engineered, designed, and built in Logan; therefore, they have a significant economic interest in the technology. He addressed the five findings in the staff report and listed five reasons that electronic billboard signs are beneficial. He also referred to a study by Dr. Zhenghong Lu, “Lighting Impacts of LED signs on city streetscapes.”

**Mike Record**, 1809 Mohawk Lane, Ogden, has worked for YESCO for 40 years and currently serves as president of the Utah Sign Association. He referred to findings #3 and #4 on page 2 of the staff report and said there is evidence from five different studies that electronic billboard signs do not increase safety concerns. He asked if staff can back up their statement with research. He said they are good corporate citizens, and they asked the City not to prohibit electronic billboard signs.

**Jared Johnson** works for YESCO and represents the Outdoor Advertising Association. He recommended that Farmington City not prohibit electronic billboard signs. They contacted several cities--West Valley City, Salt Lake City, North Salt Lake, and Sandy to ask if they have any significant complaints regarding electronic billboard signs —there have been no complaints. Their company has found that when the signs are operated under controlled brightness standards, there are no complaints from the public.

**Chairman Nilson** closed the public hearing at 7:50 p.m. and said the City received a number of emails and letters which will be attached to the minutes: **Nediha Hadzikadunic**, **Brad Schroeder**, **Dustin Smith**, **Debbie Haynie**, **Cheryl Lewis**, **Darlene Bird**, **Howard Burkholz**, **Terra Fisher** of Daktronics, **Randy George** of Allied Sign, and **James Carpentier** of the International Sign Association are all against prohibiting electronic billboard signs.

The Commission tried to determine the best avenues to obtain information and make decisions regarding electronic billboard signs. **David Petersen** said he would work with representatives from the various sign companies and the Utah League of Cities and Towns. **Chairman Nilson** stressed the importance of allowing some flexibility within the ordinance for changing technology. **Michael Wagstaff** said because there is so much ambiguity, he is not comfortable recommending a moratorium or prohibition. **Doug Herrscher** from the Utah Sign Association said they have studied these issues for years, they have reliable information to share, and they will present concrete data to City staff. **Bob Murri** said the words “prohibit” and “ban” are too strong, and the Commission needs to determine guidelines which meet the needs of the City and collaboratively work together to make that happen.

**Motion:**

**Michael Wagstaff** made a motion to table this item to allow further study and review by City staff. It was seconded by **Rick Draper** and approved by Commissioners **Anderson**, **Draper**, **Kaufman**, **Mellor**, **Murri**, **Nilson**, and **Wagstaff**.

## OTHER BUSINESS

- **2012 Utah Priorities Surveys**

**Christy Alexander** encouraged the Commissioners to read these Surveys which were sponsored by the Utah Foundation. They frame this election year's dialogue on policy issues, and the full reports are available online at [www.utahfoundation.org](http://www.utahfoundation.org).

- **Urban Forestry**

**Christy Alexander** informed the Commission that Chapter 42 of the City's Zoning Ordinance is Urban Forestry. **Neil Miller** was designated as the City's Urban Forester, and the Planning Commission was designated as the "Shade Tree Commission." Priorities include tree-lined streets in west Farmington and the replacement of sycamore trees on State and Main Streets. There was a brief discussion of information included in the Ordinance.

## ADJOURNMENT

***Motion:***

At 8:15 p.m. **Bob Murri** made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by **Brigham Mellor** and approved by Commissioners **Anderson, Draper, Kaufman, Mellor, Murri, Nilson, and Wagstaff**.

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**Michael Nilson, Chairman**  
**Farmington City Planning Commission**